

FOCUS

NEWSLETTER FOR THE OFFICE FOR THE PREVENTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

CANADIANA

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Elder abuse — not unique in the world of the abused

Since the early 1980s, elder abuse has become an area of increasing interest, particularly among caregivers and researchers. Much of the work done has addressed its unique aspects. Society in general, believes that abuse of the elderly is very different from other forms of abuse in families, but in fact, there are many common or similar factors. Abuse may be physical, emotional, or sexual, or it may take the form of neglect or financial abuse.

Annette McCullough is an elder abuse consultant and a member of the Calgary Committee on Domestic Violence. She believes it is essential to expand the current understanding of elder abuse by examining it in a larger context.

Age is not relevant to abuse

"Abuse is often on-going, so victims' ages are largely immaterial," says McCullough. "The issues and dynamics surrounding elder abuse are common to abuse at any age."

The battered 70-year-old woman may have been abused over a period of decades, so her vulnerability and living circumstances may be a continuation of unhealthy experiences. Nothing is likely to change radically once this woman reaches retirement age.

McCullough believes it is imperative that we develop an understanding and respect for the abused person and his or her life situation.

Janet Rowlands, social worker with the Elderly Adult Resource Services (E.A.R.S.) in Edmonton, says her experience providing outreach counselling to abused seniors leads her to agree with McCullough.

"Generally, abuse does not suddenly begin when a person becomes elderly," says Rowlands. "Usually it has been happening for years."

Both McCullough and Rowlands believe that

a healthy way to support abused seniors is to assist them in their decision-making process. Most seniors are capable of making healthy and appropriate decisions regarding their situation. The role of the professional is to empower seniors by giving them information, letting them know what resources are available and where to find them.

Searching for effective responses

Several community-based groups and organizations provide support to seniors.

- Edmonton's E.A.R.S. provides information and referrals to elderly people. It offers in-home assessments and responds to allegations of abuse. As well, E.A.R.S. operates a 24-hour telephone line and offers follow-up, emotional support and counselling.
- The Kerby Centre in Calgary provides a wide range of services including identification, investigation and monitoring of suspected abuse or neglect cases, crisis intervention, help in making alternative living arrangements, counselling for seniors involved in abusive relationships, support groups for battered women aged 60 or over, counselling and referral services for families and caregivers concerned about seniors, and education and support for adult children. In addition, the Centre maintains a resource centre focusing on caregiving issues with a special collection on elder abuse.
- Local health units may also provide assistance.

Resources such as these previously mentioned provide seniors with the opportunity to deal with their concerns. Access to financial and housing information, for example, may provide viable options that could alleviate abusive situations.

As recognition and understanding of elder abuse have increased, various levels of government are also taking action. Following are some recent examples of provincial and national initiatives:

- The Alberta Seniors Directorate is organizing a series of regional meetings to be held between March and May 1992 to discuss issues of concern to seniors. These meetings will be open to the community at large. In addition, selected individuals will be invited to attend study sessions this spring. Elder abuse will be one of the topics for both the regional meetings and study sessions.
- Health and Welfare Canada is planning to host information sharing sessions on elder abuse with each province during the spring and summer of 1992.
- Selected provincial representatives will attend a western regional consultation on elder abuse in April 1992 in Victoria, B.C. The purpose of the consultation is to review and discuss needs with respect to resource materials on elder abuse.

Through the successful partnership of community groups and government, and increasing knowledge of elder abuse, the problem is gaining recognition and the search for effective responses is gaining momentum.



"It was Magic!"

These are the words Shirley Ketterer, project co-ordinator for the Bow Valley Women's Resource Centre in Canmore, used to describe a recent four-day retreat held to address the issue of violence and teenage males. This unique initiative, funded through the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence, offered an opportunity for young men to form a support group as they explored their feelings about violence they had experienced. Three workshop leaders, including a psychodramatist, facilitated the retreat's activities.

The wish to have participants previously unknown to each other had Ketterer delivering presentations to many youth-related organizations and agencies to recruit prospective participants. Her selection had teens from not only nearby Banff, Canmore and Calgary, but from Edmonton, Red Deer and Lloydminster as well. Nine young men, aged 13 to 17, participated in the retreat. Six of the nine participants said they had experienced family violence.

A bond soon formed among the boys as they participated in conflict resolution sessions, recognition and identification of feelings exercises, and psychodrama sessions. The psychodrama sessions involved professionally supervised re-enactment of real life experiences of violence as described by participants. Later, the group discussed feelings associated with these violent episodes. These discussions helped solidify the bond and the sense of trust which had developed among the young men, and indeed were so successful that they preempted floor hockey!

For the first time in their lives, group members were among peers who did not condone or encourage acts of violence. Any attempt at violence-related bravado was quickly "called" by other group

members. Rather than shutting down communication, the honesty demanded by participants themselves allowed for open and free discussion.

Another aspect of the retreat was the distribution of black, shiny Apache Teardrop Stones to be carried and drawn on for strength whenever the teens found themselves in difficult situations. Weeks after the retreat, Ketterer reports that all of the five boys she has met since the retreat faithfully carry their stones.

Ketterer speaks with genuine enthusiasm when recounting the events of the successful October retreat. She and the three facilitators were buoyed by the trust and caring demonstrated by nine young men who began the retreat as strangers. She was deeply impressed by the caring demonstrated for each other, and for other young men in similar circumstances. All immediately granted permission, for example, to

have their workshop experience videotaped so others could benefit from their shared experiences. Ketterer reports that she has had many requests for this video, which is still in preliminary stages of production.

The most exhilarating part of that magical weekend, Ketterer believes, is that nine teens allowed themselves to be vulnerable and accountable for their actions. Perhaps one of these young men will remember the retreat and draw on his experiences if he encounters a difficult situation. Perhaps participating in a group retreat will make it more likely that one of these young men will seek support or counselling before they commit a violent act. Whatever the outcome, a powerfully healing experience was shared at a critical point in these nine lives and that, indeed, is magical.

For further information on this project, contact Shirley Ketterer at the Bow Valley Women's Resource Centre 678-4071.

Now Available

The I want the Violence to Stop brochure is now available in Arabic and Punjabi. Copies are also available in Simple English as well as

- Chinese
- Polish
- Spanish
- Vietnamese

*"Tôi muốn
sự bạo
hành ngừng!"*



DID YOU KNOW?

- Violence Against Women is one of several categories found in the new catalogue of women's films from the National Film Board of Canada. *Beyond the Image* provides a listing of 250 films and videos about women. For a free copy, contact Women's Marketing Office, National Film Board, #120 9700 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4C3.
- The Alberta College of Physicians and Surgeons announced their province wide patient complaint line number Dec. 20, 1991. Anyone wishing to complain of sexual misconduct by doctors is asked to dial 1-800-661-4689. The calls will be handled by Jane Karstaedt, former executive director of the Edmonton Sexual Assault Centre. Written submissions may be forwarded to Karstaedt's attention at 900 Manulife Place, 10180-101 St. Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 4P8, FAX (403) 420-0651.
- The federal and Manitoba governments, together with the Canadian Bankers' Association, have produced a video demonstrating how seniors can lessen the possibility of being financially abused. *Standing Up for Yourself* will be circulated to seniors organizations and bank employees. (Edmonton Journal).
- The Provincial Film Library in Edmonton lends out family violence videos free of charge. New acquisitions include
 - One Hit leads to Another (wife abuse)
 - Children of the Eagle (child abuse)
 - Lindsay's Story (date rape)

Call 427-4381. The government rite line may be used.

- In December, the Manitoba Assembly of Chiefs held a four day conference in Winnipeg to discuss family violence issues. Phil Fontaine, Grand Chief of the Assembly, urged the 67-member chief assembly to take on the responsibilities of family violence prevention. Fontaine acknowledged that in the past, the Manitoba Assembly of Chiefs had not given family violence issues a high priority. (The Globe and Mail)
- A joint initiative by Social Services and Humanities Research Council and Health and Welfare will make a total of \$1.5 million available to support up to three research centres across Canada. The research program will address all forms of family violence and is seeking to coordinate resource activity with community service.

- The Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women held consultations across Alberta and B. C. in late January. Over the next few months, the Panel will continue to encourage discussion among women from 100 communities across the country. A final report outlining concerns and recommendations is expected in December 1992.
- A \$1 million Community Action on Violence Against Women Project is being jointly implemented through Health and Welfare Canada and the YWCA of Canada. The project's goal is to encourage ongoing activities among various communities that aim to prevent violence. A multi-media participation kit will be developed and made available to local communities in order to facilitate their efforts on this project.
- On Dec. 16, 1991, the Honorable Mary Collins, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, announced that \$620,000 would be provided to the Bridges Employability Project to help abused women find employment. The Victoria Single Parent Resource Centre Society, project sponsor, provides training courses to help women compete in the job market.
- The Office for the Prevention of Family Violence has listings of all projects funded through the federal family violence initiatives announced in 1988 and 1991. Contact the OPFV for more information 422-5916.

Community Project Funding

Funding available in 1992-1993 for large and small scale educational initiatives which focus on prevention.

Details will be available in early March. Contact the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence then for information.

Northwest

- The Sucker Creek Band and the Big Stone Band in **Wabasca** will each open a native women's shelter in early 1992.
- The City of **Grande Prairie** is sponsoring a Wellness Wednesday series for its employees. This initiative began with panel presentations and discussions on family violence. Representatives from Odyssey House, P.A.C.E. and the John Howard Society were among the panel members.

Northeast

- The **Smoky Lake-Warspite** Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) sponsored a one-day workshop entitled *Community Response to Family Violence*. The November workshop was held because of interest expressed at an informal meeting of local caregivers.
- The **St. Paul** and District Crisis Association officially opened the Columbus House of Hope Women's Shelter Nov. 22, 1991. This new facility replaces their previous five bed satellite shelter.

Edmonton

- The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, **Edmonton** Women's Shelter Ltd. and the Edmonton Board of Health are jointly sponsoring a *Women and AIDS* project. This initiative is designed to increase public awareness, develop AIDS-related resources, and foster support services for HIV positive women, particularly those who will be using women's shelter services. For more information, contact Nancy McPherson 482-1965 ext. 241.

- **Edmonton** Family Court Services has recently undertaken three public education/awareness initiatives. The first involved a presentation about Family Court/Conciliation Services to approximately 35 staff members from Win House I and II, Safe Place and Lurana Family Centre. The presentation focused on Court Services intake and screening processes, applicable legislation, and decisions of the court on particular cases.
- A \$250,000 grant has been awarded to the Alberta Hospital **Edmonton** Forensic Services through a Correctional Service Canada Family Violence Initiative. The project will evaluate and treat high risk federal parolees during a comprehensive 25-week program which will involve family members in treatment. The Forensic Assessment and Community Services (FACS) office is now fully staffed and accepting referrals.

Central

- During November's **Family Violence Prevention Month**, two men currently receiving counselling through a **Red Deer** treatment program for batterers appeared on television to speak about the more subtle forms of abuse. These forms of abuse include persistent criticism, put downs and name calling.

Calgary

- The **Calgary** Salvation Army Grace Hospital is developing a proposal to establish a treatment centre for battered women which would provide support and follow up for women after they leave the emergency department.
- The Stoney Band in **Morley** officially opened its native women's shelter, the Eagle's Nest, Jan. 6, 1992.

South

- A "unique and innovative approach" to family violence workshops will be undertaken at the George McKillop Campus, **Lethbridge** Community College. The Skills Series: Prevention of Family Violence for Professionals offers topics in family violence prevention incorporating native and non-native perspectives. These workshops are being presented in co-operation with the Interagency Committee on the Prevention of Family Violence, a committee of helping agencies in southern Alberta. (Lethbridge Community College Campus Close-up, Winter 1991)
- Volunteers are being recruited in the **Taber** area to participate in a family violence prevention program which will involve resource development, education, and support to victims of family violence. This project, co-sponsored by the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence and the Barons-Eureka-Warner Family and Community Support Services, expects its distress line to be operational April 1, 1992.
- The City of **Lethbridge** and the Lethbridge and Area Interagency Committee on the Prevention of Family Violence sponsored a full page advertisement in the Lethbridge Herald during November's Family Violence Prevention Month. Details of the workshop and film series offered were provided as well as a listing of local agencies and organizations that deal with family violence issues.

Children of the Eagle

30 minutes 1990
Peigan Child Welfare Project

Few productions about child sexual abuse are as empowering and uplifting as *Children of the Eagle*.

This video outlines the healing of three sexually abused children once they have disclosed the abuse to an adult they trust.

Children of the Eagle invokes the symbolism of the eagle — representing bravery, leadership and wisdom — to evoke similar qualities in the community called on to help children in crisis.

The video respects both the child welfare system and the traditional native way of healing. In a caring, life-affirming way, it

recognizes that child sexual abuse and its aftermath are a community responsibility.

As each feather in a headdress is considered sacred, so is each individual in the community. A feather, fallen to the ground in a pow wow is retrieved, symbolizing the help for all who have been abused. The final scenes show each of the three children reaching skyward and receiving an eagle plume, confirming that their community values and respects them.

If you would like to borrow a copy of *Children of the Eagle*, write to the Provincial Film Library, 11510 Kingsway Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 2Y5, or telephone them at 427-4381. There is a waiting list to borrow this video.

If you are interested in receiving a copy of *Children of the Eagle* and its accompanying resource handbook, please forward a blank, 60 minute VHS tape to:

National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program
Medical Services Branch
Room 1186 Jeanne Mance Building
Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0L3
Telephone (613) 990-9924.

Address your request to the attention of Trish Beaudin. There is no charge for the service. Because of the popularity of this video, you may experience some delays in receiving your copy.

Breaking the Code

15 minutes 1991
Wood's Homes/Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter

The video's title refers to breaking the code of secrecy surrounding abuse. This production identifies breaking the code as the first step necessary to prevent abuse in future generations. Riveting interviews with both abusers and abused reinforce that violence is a learned behavior:

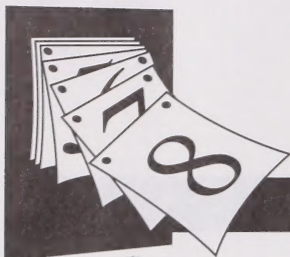
- A pre-teen who witnesses and experiences physical abuse tells of the violence she has inflicted on others;

- An abusive father recognizes his violence is one way he controls his family, as it had been for his father before him;
- A mother believes the violence her son experienced at home destroyed him; her son first became scared, then became violent.

The video makes a plea to have our society break the silence on matters of abuse. The testimonies from real life survivors and abusers help demonstrate how the cycle of violence is perpetuated if intervention does not occur.

A list of resources is provided to assist anyone experiencing violence.

For more information, contact
Department of Com/Media
University of Calgary
2500 University Drive N.W.
Calgary, Alberta
Telephone (403) 220-6935



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Please note the date of this conference has changed since the last issue of *Focus*

March 2-5, 1992, Victoria, British Columbia

JUSTICE: EXTENDING THE VISION

(A national conference on victimization and recovery)

CONTACT: Shelley Rivkin
Justice Institute of B.C.
(604) 222-7251

April 16,17 and 18, 1992, Winnipeg, Manitoba

"SORROW AND STRENGTH: THE PROCESS"

(A conference for adult survivors of child sexual abuse and for the professional helper)

CONTACT: 1992 Conference Co-ordinating Committee
160 Garfield St. S.
Winnipeg, MB
R3G 2L8
(204) 786-1971

April 27-28, 1992, Edmonton, Alberta

"WHEN CHILDREN MOLEST CHILDREN"

(A conference dealing with abuse reactive and sexually aggressive children)

CONTACT: Wurmman, Egan and Associates Ltd
10129 - 123 St
Edmonton, Alberta
(403) 482-7979

May 13-15, 1992, Grande Prairie, Alberta

ADVANCING THE PERSPECTIVE: Building a foundation

(A conference to establish a provincial victim's assistance organization. Sessions on family violence, police issues and native awareness offered).

CONTACT: April Weavil
Box 1395
Grande Prairie, Alberta
T8V 4Z2
(403) 538-1332

May 20-23, 1992, Victoria, British Columbia

BACK TO THE CENTRE

(8th National Canadian Child and Youth Care Conference)

CONTACT: P.O. Box 5359
Station B
Victoria, B.C.
V8R 6S3
(604) 721-7988
FAX (604) 721-8774

July 7-11, 1992, Edmonton, Alberta

**"HEALING OUR SPIRIT
WORLDWIDE"**

CONTACT: Kim Ghostkeeper
(403) 459-0989
FAX (403) 458-1883

November 5-7, 1992, Calgary, Alberta

**BUILDING A CO-ORDINATED
RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY AND
FAMILY VIOLENCE**

CONTACT: Mary Jane Amey
(403) 268-2431

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